

dered to our shores; and on seeing how numerous in some cases they are, one cannot refrain from the feeling that it is far from impossible that we might now own some of these birds as established settlers had the treatment they received at our hands been reversed. The passion for collecting British-killed birds, so prevalent at the present time, has much to answer for.

In his introductory chapter, Mr. Harting has analyzed the occasional visitants to show the origin whence they came. It is not a little surprising to see how large is the proportion of American species which again and again find their way to these shores. He finds it extremely difficult to believe that the non-aquatic species have actually performed unaided this journey of, at least, 1700 miles; but of the powers of sustained flight possessed by birds we, as yet, know very little indeed, and the task may not, under favourable circumstances, be so difficult as it would appear.

In reading Mr. Harting's book we detect some errors perhaps unavoidable in a work of the kind; but there are others we hardly expected to see, such as the mistake about the Grouse and Ptarmigan in the Introduction (p. xvii). We are not aware that the distinctness of the Ptarmigan of Scotland from the continental bird has ever been advocated; whilst the validity of the Grouse of the British Islands to be considered a species distinct from the Willow Grouse has been a bone of contention for years. Then, too, Gilbert White's account of the Honey Buzzard breeding in Selborne Hanger is overlooked, and also the fact of the Harlequin Duck breeding regularly in considerable numbers in Iceland. Mr. Harting records it as of accidental occurrence in Europe.

But we are not disposed to criticise too severely a book which will prove of undoubted service.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### *The Bell Collection of Reptiles.*

*To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

Museum of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy,  
Cambridge, Nov. 22, 1872.

GENTLEMEN,—My attention has been drawn to the letters of Prof. Westwood and Dr. Gray in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' for November 1872, respecting Mr. Bell's collection of reptiles. I beg to be allowed to make the following statement.

The whole of that gentleman's museum was purchased by my late father, Professor Clark, in 1856, who thus describes the acquisition in the preface to the 'Catalogue of the Osteological Portion of Specimens contained in the Anatomical Museum of the University of Cambridge' (Cambridge, 1862):—

"In 1856 I had the pleasure of increasing the Collection by adding to it the osteological collection of Professor Bell, F.R.S., &c.

&c., by which every order of Vertebrata is more adequately represented, and especially that of the Reptiles, amongst which is that valuable collection he had formed for the illustration of his work on the 'Testudinata.' His specimens are marked 'Bell collection.'"

It is of course quite possible that some specimens might have passed into the hands of dealers before Mr. Bell sold the collection; but these could not have formed an important portion of the whole, as Mr. Bell expressly stated to my father that he was selling to him his entire museum. This fact is impressed upon my memory by the recollection of my father's annoyance and regret at the non-appearance of one specimen, a skull of the Sumatran rhinoceros, which was noted in Mr. Bell's MS. catalogue (which I now possess) as part of his collection, and which could never be found. It would be interesting, especially at the present time, to know what has become of this skull.

We have at present at least thirty-three skeletons and parts of skeletons of *Chelonia* alone, which belonged to Mr. Bell—a number even larger than that noted in his Catalogue. I think this fact proves conclusively that whatever Mr. Hope may have purchased and given to the Oxford Museum, it could not have been the "Bell Collection of Reptiles" properly so called. I ought to mention that we received no specimens in spirit from Mr. Bell, nor any in a stuffed state.

There is but one trifling error in Dr. Gray's letter of October 24. He says that he consulted Mr. Bell's specimens "in the Museum of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, where they were before they were transferred to the Anatomical Museum." The collection was never placed, even for a single day, in any other building than the Museum of Anatomy.

I am, Gentlemen,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. W. CLARK (Superintendent).

*To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

November 22, 1872.

GENTLEMEN,—My attention having been directed to a correspondence in the 'Annals' between Dr. Gray and Professor Westwood, I find myself called upon to state that Dr. Gray is entirely in error respecting the distribution of my collection of Reptilia, including, in particular, the Testudinata.

In the year 1856 I sent a few specimens of the latter, with others of my osteological collection, to my late friend Professor Clark, of Cambridge. Amongst them there are now in the museum at Cambridge, as I am informed by my friend Professor Newton, *the shells* of only about half a dozen species of Testudinata, besides a few heads and several osteological specimens. In 1861, five years subsequently to my sending these few specimens to Cambridge, the whole of my large collection of Reptilia was purchased by Mr. Hope, in order to present

it entire to the new museum at Oxford, where it now is. Amongst the specimens included are those which formed the subjects figured in my work on the Testudinata. I have to add that the few duplicates (for such they were) of the shells of tortoises at Cambridge are, most of them, of common occurrence in collections.

THOMAS BELL.

*On Spatulemys Lasalæ, a new Genus of Hydraspidæ from Rio Parana, Corrientes.* By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S. &c.

Colonel P. Perez de Lasala has kindly presented to the Museum a water-tortoise from Rio Parana, Corrientes, which has not been recorded in scientific catalogues. It differs from *Hydraspis* in the general form of the head and thorax, and in the head being entirely covered with small shields. It is like *Hydromedusa* in many particulars, especially in the thorax of one sex at least being concave; but it has a regular small nuchal plate.

SPATULEMYS.

Thorax oblong, elongate, depressed, with a distinct elongate nuchal plate. First vertebral plate very broad; second, third, and fourth longer than broad; anterior marginal plates broad; the second and ninth largest, angular above. The sternum elongate, broad and rounded in front, deeply notched behind; gular plate large, marginal. Head broad, depressed, entirely covered with small polygonal shields; forehead convex, rhombic, with a broad flat crown between the very large temporal muscles; chin with two beards; mouth broad and rounded in front. The two outer hinder claws very small, rudimentary. Tail conical. Sternum in male (?) slightly concave, especially behind.

*Spatulemys Lasalæ.*

Shell above olive, nearly uniform, with a few small black spots on the margin, which are more abundant and larger on the hinder plates. Thorax and underside of margin pale, with symmetrical black spots, which are largest on the front and sides of thorax. Length of thorax 15 in., breadth  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in.; length of head  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in.

*Hab.* Rio Parana, Corrientes (Colonel P. Perez de Lasala, November 5, 1872).

*Observations on the Metamorphoses of the Bony Fishes in general, and especially on those of a small Chinese Fish, of the Genus Macropoda, recently introduced into France.* By M. N. JOLY.

In a letter addressed to M. H. Milne-Edwards on the 24th of December 1864, M. Agassiz expressed himself as follows:—"I have lately observed among fishes metamorphoses as considerable as those which are known among reptiles. Now-a-days, when pisciculture is pursued with such success and on so large a scale, it is surprising that this fact has not long since been observed"\*.

\* See Ann. des Sci. Nat. 5<sup>e</sup> sér. tom. iii. p. 55.